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HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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MCO 1500.52C
C461TP
31 Jul 04

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1500.52C

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE COMBAT WATER SURVIVAL TRAINING (MCWST)

Ref: (a) MCO 1510.125, Individual Training Standards (ITS) for the Marine Combat Water Survival Training Program
(b) MCRP 3-02C, Marine Combat Water Survival Handbook
(c) MCO 3500.27A, Operational Risk Management
(d) Naval Safety Center High-Risk Training Safety Checklist Supplement for Combat Water Survival & Pool Facility Requirements
(e) MCO 5102.1A w/ch1, Marine Corps Ground Mishap Reporting
(f) OPNAVINST 3710.7S, NATOPS General Flight and Operating Instructions
(g) MCO P1200.7Y, Military Occupational Specialties Manual
(h) MCO P1080.40C, MCTFS PRIM
(i) NAVMED P-117, Manual of the Medical Department (MMD) Chapters 16-50

Encl: (1) [NAVMC 11209](#) (REV. 3-95) Instructor's Course Record
(2) MCITWS Certification
(3) MCIWS Certification
(4) CWSS Certification

1. Purpose. To provide policy and instructions on Marine Combat Water Survival Training (MCWST).

2. Cancellation. MCO 1500.52B.

3. Summary of Revision. This Order no longer includes task-oriented material due to the publication of reference (a). Additionally, this revision more clearly articulates policy guidance, establishes swim qualification ratings and associated prerequisites further standardizing Combat Water Survival Training.

4. Background. In accordance with Marine Corps Strategy 21, the MCWST program is designed to prepare Marines for deployment to diverse, austere, and chaotic environments. Marines, inherently naval in character, are expected to operate in the world's littoral regions and other aquatic environments. To this end, the MCWST program should equip Marines with the requisite knowledge and skills to negotiate water obstacles and survive in emergency situations involving water. The MCWST program uses a building block approach, employing successive water qualification levels of increasing difficulty that improve both skills and confidence in water. While qualification requirements vary repsective to rank and/or Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), the program is designed to maintain water survival skills during a Marine's career. Reference (b) contains information regarding specific techniques and procedures for water survival training.

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5. Safety Education. MCWST techniques and the associated conditioning that accompanies their application are rigorous. The ability to safely and professionally conduct MCWST techniques is very important. Accordingly, Operational Risk Management (ORM), per reference (c), should be employed in all phases of training to minimize injuries. Reference (d) can be located via the World Wide Web on the Naval Safety Center's homepage at www.safetycenter.navy.mil. Safety parameters should be established for all individual and group training, and practiced and reinforced by Marine Combat Instructors of Water Survival (MCIWS) and Marine Combat Instructor Trainers of Water Survival (MCITWS).

a. ORM assessments are continuous and are the responsibility of each instructor providing training.

b. Accurate, detailed, and timely incident reporting assists in the monitoring of the effectiveness of training and identifies potential safety hazards. An injury during water survival training that requires emergency medical personnel to respond will be reported per reference (e) to Headquarters, Marine Corps (HQMC), Safety Division (SD) and Commanding General (CG) Training and Education Command (TECOM) (C461). The narrative will include: specific Program of Instruction (POI) element being executed at the time of the mishap (e.g., qualification or CWSS or MCIWS courses); qualification being attempted (e.g., CWS4, CWS3, CWS2, etc.); student's current qualification; date of the incident; location of incident; instructor's certification level; expiration date; and the description of the pool facilities.

6. General Information. The objective of combat water survival training is to teach individual Marines how to survive in various aquatic environments. Accordingly, the aim of combat water survival training is to reduce fear of the water, raise self-confidence, and develop an ability to survive in water. Mastery of basic survival strokes is very important; however, it is more important that Marines demonstrate a working knowledge of basic survival strokes, rather than execute them to "textbook" perfection.

a. MCWST requirements are developed in conjunction with the American Red Cross (ARC).

b. Combat water survival qualification and requalification will be conducted in accordance with reference (a) and recorded on a calendar year (CY) basis.

c. Duties Involving Flight Operations. The term "aircrew" refers to all Marine Corps personnel (officer/enlisted) in an active flight status. While in an active flight status, aircrews are subject to the regulations and procedures contained in reference (f) and the Naval Aviation Water Survival Training Program, vice the Marine Corps Water Survival Program. Once off active flight status, individual Marines are subject to MCWST regulations, and have 90 days to qualify at the required level or will be considered unqualified.

7. Qualification. All Marines regardless of age, grade, or component will qualify and requalify per the following guidelines or as required per the regulations and procedures contained in references (a), (f), and (g).

a. UNQ - Remedial swim training until qualified.

b. CWS4 - Minimum qualification requirement for enlisted Marines; requalify every year.

c. CWS3 - Requalify every two years.

d. CWS2 - Minimum qualification requirement for officers; requalify every three years.

e. CWS1 - Requalify every four years.

f. WSQ - Requalify every six years.

g. Requalification must take place before the expiration date of current level. To attain a higher qualification, Marines must qualify at the next higher level before current level expiration date. A Marine must requalify at CWS4 if:

(1) The current level qualification date has lapsed.

(2) The Marine is unable to requalify at the current level.

h. Marines unable to participate in or pass the required qualification because of a limited duty status at the time of the officially scheduled testing will complete testing no later than 60 days from return to full duty. A limited duty status (requiring a medical officer's recommendation) will be entered into the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) per reference (h), only if the convalescent/limited duty period extends beyond the expiration date of the Marine's current swim qualification. Permanent waivers of swim qualification are not authorized.

i. Exemptions to Requalification Requirements. All Marines, regardless of age, rank, or time in service, must obtain and maintain a valid swim qualification during their careers. Marines stationed at the commands listed below are exempt for the duration of their tour. However, those Marines are encouraged to requalify and advance their swim qualification if the opportunity is available. Marines exempt from requalification may be directed to requalify at the discretion of their commanding officer at anytime.

(1) Commanding generals have the authority to exempt Marines in their commands for current CYs. Requests for exemptions will be forwarded to commanding generals, via the chain of command with a copy to CG, TECOM (C461). Requests with justification for exemptions of periods extending past one CY will be forwarded to CG, TECOM (C461). Address for submission of an exemption request:

COMMANDING GENERAL, TRAINING AND EDUCATION COMMAND (C461)
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
3300 RUSSELL ROAD
QUANTICO, VA 22134-5012

(2) Marines (except TBS students) assigned to service and civilian formal schools for duty under instruction for a minimum period of six months or more during the CY.

(3) Marines assigned to Headquarters Battalion, HQMC.

(4) Marines assigned to Marine Security Guard Battalion outside the continental United States (CONUS).

(5) Marines assigned to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command (except personnel located at MCB Quantico, Virginia).

(6) Marines assigned to Marine Support Battalion, Naval Security Group (Table of Organization (T/O) #5201).

(7) Marines in a combat zone.

(8) Marines assigned to Interservice Schools (T/O #5060).

(9) Marine Corps Security Force companies and detachments outside of CONUS.

(10) Marines assigned to joint commands.

(11) Marines assigned to the Marine Detachment, U. S. Disciplinary Barracks, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

(12) Aviation instructor personnel assigned to Marine Aviation Training Support Groups.

(13) Aircrew in an active flight status.

(14) Marines assigned to Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, California.

(15) Marines assigned to Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, California.

8. Responsibilities

a. Commanders, Marine Forces (COMMARFORs)

(1) Ensure all MCITWS, MCIWS, and CWSS certifications and re-certifications are in compliance with reference (a), this Order, and CG, TECOM approved POIs. A record of all qualifications will be maintained locally for evaluation under the Inspector General's (IG) Checklist for a period of three years.

(2) Upon approval from a commanding officer or designated representative, MCWST qualification/waiver/certification will be recorded in the MCTFS per reference (h).

(3) MCWST entries will also be made in the medical record of Marines on flight status and those designated as Marine Combatant Divers (MCD). Flight status entries will be made per reference (i). MCD entries will be made on NAVMED Form 6150/2, (Rev. 4-70, Medical History-Special Duty Extract), in the boxes provided under "Submarine Escape and Diving" (medical officer's signature only)).

(4) Commands, organizations, and activities without a MCITWS may request a Mobile Training Team (MTT) from the Combat Water Survival Swimming

School (CWSSS) to conduct MCIWS courses. Costs for MTTs will be borne by the requesting unit.

(5) All MCITWSs and MCIWSs are encouraged to maintain liaison with the Director, CWSSS. Any abuses or infractions during training must be reported in a timely manner. Course feedback and critiques should also be shared with the Director, CWSSS.

(6) Commanding officers and Director, CWSSS, have the right to revoke a Marine's MCITWS or MCIWS qualification for conduct infractions or unacceptable behavior.

(7) Commands are encouraged to incorporate the MCWST program into their physical fitness programs.

(8) It is recommended that every regimental/group level command maintain at least one MCITWS in order to properly conduct and sustain training and advancement. A qualified and current MCIWS or MCITWS is required for MCWST.

(9) Commands with qualified MCITWSs and/or MCIWSs will ensure that their certification is valid per this Order. MCITWSs and MCIWSs must conduct a minimum of one course annually to maintain instructor proficiency and qualification. Instructors who do not maintain currency will have their certification and Additional Military Occupational Specialty (AMOS) suspended by their command. Recertification per this Order is necessary for an instructor to be reinstated.

(10) Commands must notify Director, CWSSS, of their intent to conduct MCIWS courses.

(11) United States Navy personnel serving with the Marine Corps are authorized and encouraged to participate in MCWST, and may be certified as instructors or instructor trainers. Sailors serving in the capacity of MCITWS or MCIWS may not serve as corpsmen for the same evolution.

(12) Commands without adequate pool facilities are required to seek access to external pool facilities to conduct the necessary training.

(13) Commands without diving platforms or with inadequate diving platforms will request a waiver 30 days prior to commencing training from CG, TECOM (C461) per paragraph 12.

(14) Commands are responsible for conducting the necessary training for personnel requiring a specific qualification level per unit T/O or mission.

(15) Commands will place Marines failing qualification or requalification on a command-supervised remedial swim program under the direction of a current MCIWS/MCITWS. Marines failing to requalify will have the appropriate entry made in the MCTFS.

(16) Record keeping requirements will be accomplished using enclosure (1). Local reproduction of this form is authorized.

b. Commanding General, Training and Education Command

(1) Provide program management for MCWST, to include sponsoring this Order and reference (a).

(2) Provide financial and managerial support for MCWST program budget development and execution.

(3) Ensure the Training Input Plan includes MCITWS courses.

(4) Act as Occupational Field Sponsor for the 8563 AMOS.

(5) Determine and distribute annual MCITWS requirements and quotas. Normally, one course will be offered in March at the CWSSS, Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools (MCCSSS), MCB Camp Lejeune, North Carolina and one in September at Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific (EWTGPAC), Coronado, California. Other courses will be added as needed. Supporting establishments are authorized direct liaison with CG, TECOM (C461) for course quotas. Operating force activities, major subordinate command levels (division/wing/group) are authorized direct liaison with CG, TECOM (C461) for course quotas.

c. Commanding Generals, Marine Corps Recruit Depots

(1) Conduct initial MCWST and testing for all recruits and make appropriate qualification entries in the MCTFS per reference (h).

(2) Upgrade recruits for specific Program Enlisted For (PEF) codes as required by reference (g).

d. Commanding Officer, The Basic School (CO TBS). Conduct MCWST and testing for all entry-level officers and make appropriate qualification entries in the MCTFS per reference (h).

e. Director, Combat Water Survival Swimming School (CWSSS)

(1) Responsible for overall development of MCWST POIs.

(2) Develop course materials, advanced skills training packages, and special skills training packages, to enhance MCWST, and/or assist the operational forces.

(3) Maintain a record of certified MCITWSs.

(4) Conduct and/or coordinate MCITWS MTTs.

(5) Conduct and/or coordinate MCITWS certification and recertification courses.

(6) Sole authority for training and certification of MCITWSs.

(7) Ensure that MCIWS certification and re-certification course curriculum is maintained, revised, and distributed to current MCITWSs.

(8) Receive notification of all MCIWS courses conducted by MCITWSs.

(9) Ensure quality assurance of MCWST by:

(a) Providing all course materials to MCITWSs.

(b) Maintaining a current library of all approved course material for access and distribution.

(c) Planning and conducting periodic visits to the MCRDs and other sites.

(11) Maintain close liaison with MCITWSs in the operating forces to ensure training is conducted professionally and in an operationally risk assessed environment.

(12) Ensure that proper annotation is made in the MCTFS for graduates of courses held at the CWSSS or taught by CWSSS personnel via MTT.

(13) Advise CG, TECOM on program waiver requests.

(14) Develop MCWST equipment requirements.

(15) Plan and conduct Course Content Review Boards (CCRBs) to evaluate the MCITWS, MCIWS, and Combat Water Safety Swimmer (CWSS) Courses.

9. Marine Combat Water Survival Training Billet Descriptions. MCWST is based on a "train the trainer" concept, and implemented through a systems approach to training with an emphasis placed on common skills required of all Marines. The hierarchy of MCWST:

a. Chief Instructor Trainer, MCWST. The Chief Instructor Trainer advises the Director, CWSSS, on overall development of MCWST. He/she is resident at the CWSSS, and is responsible for the research, development, and performance of the techniques and procedures taught in MCWST. The Chief Instructor Trainer must be a MCITWS who can train and certify MCITWSs. Additional responsibilities include monitoring the quality of MCWST training throughout the Marine Corps, to include the recruit depots and basic officer water survival training, as well as conducting CWSS/MCIWS courses as needed.

b. Marine Combat Instructor Trainer of Water Survival (MCITWS)- AMOS 8563. The MCITWS trains and certifies MCIWSs and conducts water survival training through CWSS certification. To be designated a MCITWS, a Marine must meet prerequisites contained in this Order and successfully complete the MCITWS Course. MCITWS certification is valid for three years.

(1) To maintain currency, a MCITWS must conduct a minimum of one MCIWS certification course per CY or the command will suspend his/her MCITWS qualification until recertified. If MCITWS certification lapses, the Marine will automatically revert to a MCIWS. If this occurs, the Marine can still conduct MCWST courses as a MCIWS until his/her certification ends or until they recertify as a MCITWS or MCIWS.

(2) Recertification for MCITWSs may take place at the CWSSS, or any other location, provided the current recertification standards are utilized. The recertifying MCITWS must hold both a current ARC Lifeguard Instructor Trainer and MCITWS certification.

(3) All MCITWSs, regardless of locale, can instruct, and certify or recertify a MCIWS if their curriculum and facilities satisfy all course requirements per the approved POI.

c. Marine Combat Instructor of Water Survival (MCIWS)- AMOS 8563. Conducts water survival training and is authorized to qualify to the CWSS level. MCIWS certification or recertification is valid for three years.

(1) To maintain currency, a MCIWS must conduct a minimum of one qualification session per CY or the command will suspend his/her MCIWS qualification and the AMOS 8563 until recertified. If MCIWS certification lapses, the Marine will have to go through the MCIWS course again. In addition, the MCIWS will automatically revert to CWSS and cannot conduct MCWST until recertified.

(2) Recertification for MCIWSs may take place at the CWSSS, or any other location, provided the current recertification standards are utilized. The recertifying MCITWS must hold both a current ARC Lifeguard Instructor Trainer and MCITWS certification.

d. Combat Water Safety Swimmer (CWSS). A CWSS is trained to perform water rescues in tactical or training environments. CWSSs possess the knowledge necessary to advise commanders on conducting aquatic training. Marines certified as CWSSs may assist MCIWSs/MCITWSs during courses of instruction and may serve as safety swimmers for pool and other aquatic training. A CWSS cannot conduct MCWST. CWSS certification is valid for three years and renewable after recertification by a qualified MCIWS/MCITWS. If CWSS certification lapses, the Marine automatically reverts to WSQ, requiring an appropriate entry be made in the MCTFS.

10. Instructor Responsibilities. All instructors will ensure compliance with this Order and CG, TECOM (C461) approved POIs, with emphasis on safety and qualifying standards.

a. Instructor Record. Ensure submission of [NAVMC Form 11209](#), Instructor's Course Record, enclosure (1) to the appropriate commands and the Director, CWSSS, immediately upon completion of each course.

b. Safety Requirements. When conducting swim training, qualification, or requalification, MCITWSs/MCIWSs are responsible for ensuring that corpsmen are present at all times and equipped with medic bag, backboard, and safety vehicle. The CWSSS, EWTGPAC, and Entry Level Training (ELT) sites (MCRDs and TBS) are exempt from this requirement due to the presence of an advanced level of supervision, number of qualified instructors, and the pool facilities' close proximity to emergency medical services.

c. Instructor/Student Ratio. During the conduct of MCWST, the maximum number of students will not exceed 10 per instructor. As an exception to this rule, if qualified CWSSs are present during MCWST, a MCIWS or MCITWS can supervise up to six CWSSs, with each CWSS supervising up to five students.

d. Civilian Augmentees. Civilians certified as ARC lifeguards working at pools may only be used to assist qualified MCITWSs/MCIWSs, but are not authorized to conduct any classes or certifications.

11. MCWST Courses Available

a. Marine Combat Instructor Trainer of Water Survival (MCITWS) Course

(1) Instructor Trainer certification course offered at the CWSSS or EWTGPAC.

(2) Nominees must: be a staff sergeant (waiverable to sergeant with endorsement from a commanding officer at battalion/squadron level or higher); be a current MCIWS with one year of instructor experience (waiverable to nine months or as a requirement for the recruit depots) and have conducted two qualification sessions before application to the MCITWS course; have one year obligated service remaining upon completion of the course; hold current ARC lifeguard and CPR/PR certifications; be screened and recommended by a current MCITWS; and pass prerequisites contained in enclosure (2).

(3) All course graduates will be certified as MCITWSs. Enlisted Marines retain the AMOS 8563.

(4) In order to convene a MCITWS course you must have a minimum of six students.

(5) Due to requirements within the MCITWS POI, three MCITWS are required to conduct the course.

b. Marine Combat Instructor of Water Survival (MCIWS) Course

(1) Instructor certification course conducted by any command with a certified MCITWS, utilizing approved course material.

(2) Nominees must: be a corporal (waiverable to lance corporal with endorsement from commanding officer at battalion/squadron level or higher); have one year obligated service remaining upon completion of the course; hold a current WSQ qualification; be screened and recommended by a current MCITWS/MCIWS; and pass prerequisites contained in enclosure (3).

(3) All course graduates will be certified as MCIWSs. Enlisted Marines will receive the AMOS 8563. Marines who pass the CWSS portion of the course, but fail to graduate, will be certified/recertified as CWSS.

(4) In order to convene a MCIWS course you must have a minimum of six students.

(5) Due to requirements within the MCIWS POI, three MCITWS are required to conduct the course.

c. Combat Water Safety Swimmer (CWSS) Course

(1) Instructor certification course conducted by any command with a current and certified MCITWS or MCIWS, utilizing approved course material.

(2) Nominees must: have one year obligated service remaining upon completion of the course; hold a current WSQ qualification; be screened and recommended by a current MCITWS/MCIWS; and pass prerequisites contained in enclosure (4). There is no rank requirement for CWSS.

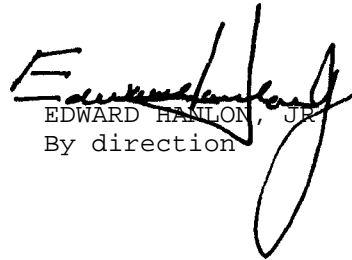
12. Waivers for Facilities. Not all training facilities contain the requisite platform or platform height for swim qualification in accordance with reference (a). Commands should follow the intent of this Order and reference (a) and conduct training and qualifications to the best of their ability. Any deviation from the qualification standards requires the submission of a waiver to CG, TECOM (C461) for approval no later than 30 days before the training is conducted. Address for the submission of a waiver:

MCO 1500.52C
31 Jul 04

COMMANDING GENERAL, TRAINING AND EDUCATION COMMAND (C461)
MARINE CORPS COMBAT DEVELOPMENT COMMAND
3300 RUSSELL ROAD
QUANTICO, VA 22134-5012

13. Reserve Applicability. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Reserve.

14. Certification. Reviewed and approved this date.


EDWARD HANLON, JR.
By direction

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NAVMC 11209 (REV. 3-95) (EF) (PAGE 2)

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MCITWS CERTIFICATION

1. A Marine attending the Marine Combat Instructor Trainer of Water Survival (MCITWS) course must complete this test with a current MCITWS and this certification will be signed by their Commanding Officer. The qualifications attested to on this form will be verified by demonstration the first training day of the course.

2. Name SSN MOS
_____/____-____-_____/____ has successfully completed the following prerequisites for attendance at MCIWS or MCITWS course:

a. 1,000 meter swim in 22 minutes or less using a continuous crawl stroke.

b. Use a feet first entry and swim 25m underwater without breaking the surface.

c. In full combat gear (minus rifle and pack), properly conduct a CWSS rescue in accordance with MCO 1510.125.

d. Swim 50 meters using the lifesaving stroke, while holding a ten-pound weight with one hand out of the water and without changing hands.

Printed name of MCIWS or
MCITWS

Printed name of CO

Signature MCIWS or MCITWS
conducting screening

Signature of CO

Unit Telephone Number

Title Grade

MCIWS CERTIFICATION

1. A Marine attending the Marine Combat Instructor of Water Survival (MCIWS) course must complete this test with a current MCIWS/MCITWS and this certification will be signed by their Commanding Officer. The qualifications attested to on this form will be verified by demonstration the first training day of the course.

2. Name SSN MOS
_____/_____-_____-_____/_____ has successfully completed the following prerequisites for attendance at MCIWS or MCITWS course:

- a. 500 meter swim in 13 minutes or less using a continuous crawl stroke.
- b. Conduct a brick retrieval by entering the water 20 yds away, surface diving to retrieve 10 pound brick, and swimming back to point of entry. Both hands must remain on the weight and face must remain out of the water.
- c. Use a feet first entry and swim 25m underwater without breaking the surface.
- d. Swim 50m using the lifesaving stroke, while holding a ten-pound weight with one hand out of the water and without changing hands.

Printed name of MCIWS or
MCITWS

Printed name of CO

Signature MCIWS or MCITWS
conducting screening

Signature of CO

Unit Telephone Number

Title Grade

CWSS CERTIFICATION

1. A Marine attending the Marine Combat Instructor of Water Survival (MCIWS) or Marine Combat Instructor Trainer of Water Survival (MCITWS) course must complete this test with a current MCIWS/MCITWS and this certification will be signed by their Commanding Officer. The qualifications attested to on this form will be verified by demonstration the first training day of the course.

2. Name SSN MOS
_____/____-____-_____/____ has satisfactorily completed the following prerequisites for attendance at MCIWS or MCITWS course:

- a. 500 meter swim in 14 minutes or less using a continuous crawl stroke.
- b. Conduct a brick retrieval by entering the water 20 yds away, surface diving to retrieve 10 pound brick, and swimming back to point of entry. Both hands must remain on the weight and face must remain out of the water.
- c. Use a feet first entry and swim 25m underwater without breaking the surface.
- d. Swim 50m using the lifesaving stroke, while holding a ten-pound weight with one hand out of the water and without changing hands.

Printed name of MCIWS or
MCITWS

Printed name of CO

Signature MCIWS or MCITWS
conducting screening

Signature of CO

Unit Telephone Number

Title Grade